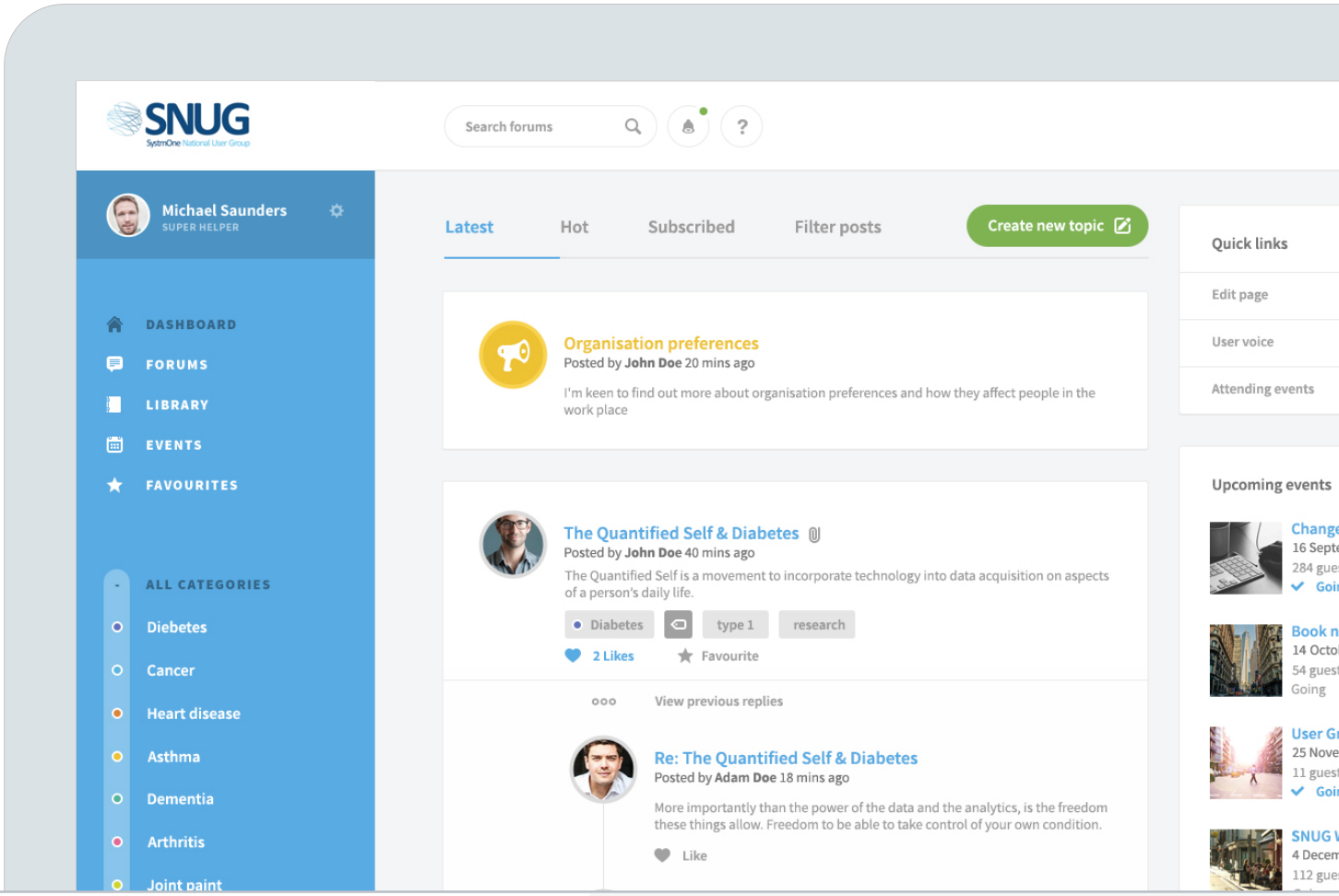
Creating a social network for the NHS

A case study by SilverStripe and professional partner CSL web

SilverStripe



SNUG
SystmOne National User Group

SystmOne is a clinical system which supports the 'one patient, one record' model of healthcare. Using SystmOne, healthcare professionals in the UK can access a single source of information, detailing a patient's medical history across their lifetime. It was introduced by the government as part of it plan to modernise IT in the National Health Service (NHS) and is the most widely used GP system.

Introduction

To become a government accredited system, SystmOne required a national user knowledge base to allow the sharing of best practice advice and tips for new ways of working.

With a remit to promote collaborative working amongst healthcare professionals, SystmOne's creators TPP (The Phoenix Partnership) provided funding to establish the SystmOne National User Group (SNUG) website to coordinate the discussion between primary care trusts, GPS and other clinicians.

50,000
Visits since launch

700+
Clinicians signed up since launch

350
Conference tickets booked

The Challenge

Previously SNUG had connected healthcare professionals using an email list server. Any subscriber could send comments to the server and all other users would receive them in email.

Distributed across thousands of emails a day, conversations became messy and fragmented. It became difficult to engage with the list and, because it clogged up inboxes, points became lost in unwieldy chains. It was also difficult to share documents, images and multimedia content.

This complexity meant users couldn't be confident that a message sent received the attention it deserved, or if actions would be taken.

SNUG needed a way to communicate that would engage all its audiences, from practice nurses to highly technical consulting physicians, and deliver an experience personalised to their role. It had to be easy to use, accessible anywhere and group topics and discussions in a logical and organised way.

Finally SNUG needed a system that could be effective and adaptable even at scale, while keeping speed with the changing, modern web. As a not for profit organisation, budget was also a careful consideration.

"There had to be a simple, scalable alternative that would work better."

Dr Tony Willis, Clinical Lead for IT, Diabetes and CKD at Hammersmith and Fulham CCG said: "The committee exists to help healthcare professionals communicate and collaborate. Despite some early success, an email-based system felt like a burden as often as it was a blessing -- it was clear email simply wasn't made for this job. We knew the web was changing and, especially with a clear budget, there had to be a simple, scalable alternative that would work better."

The Solution

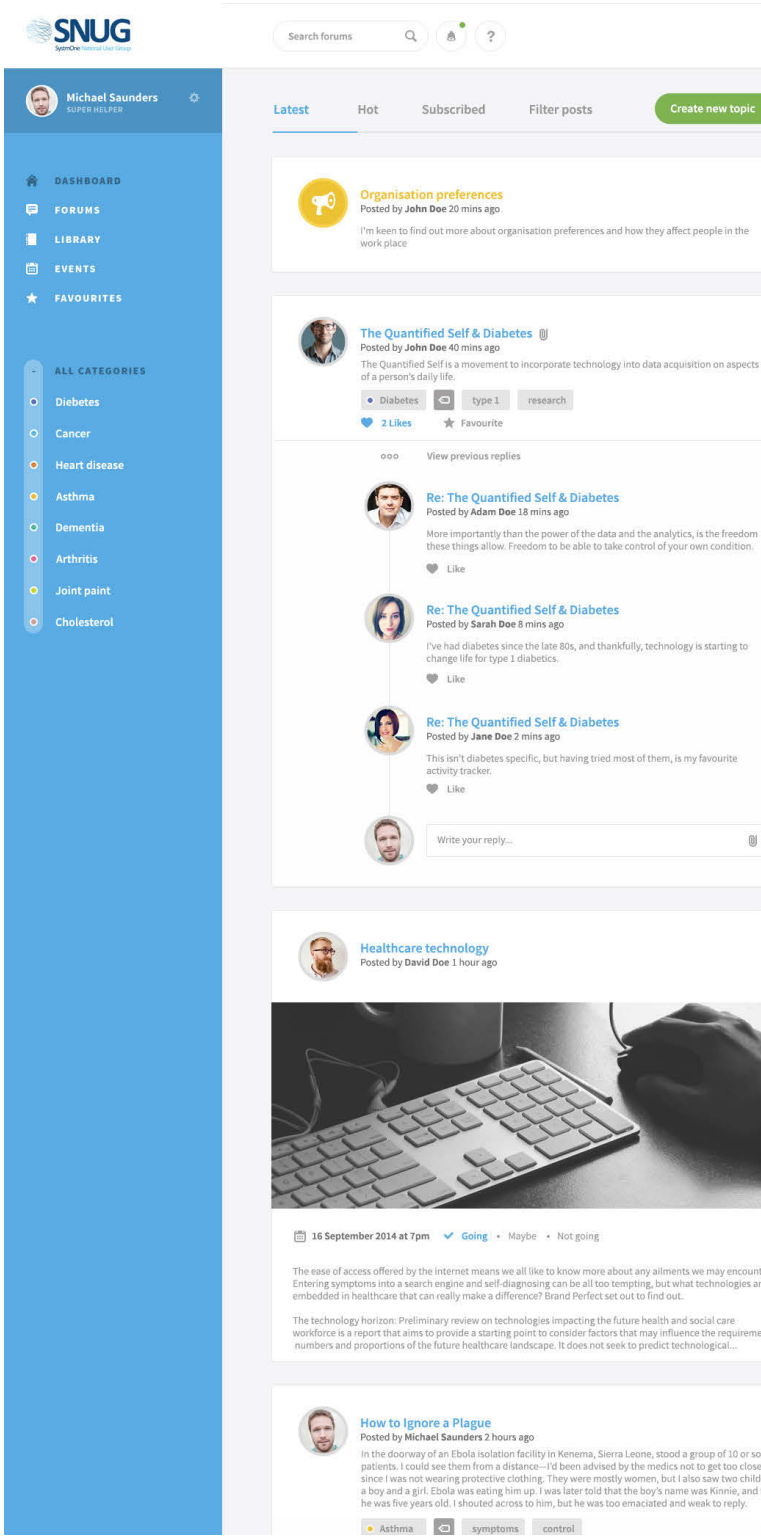
Following a high profile RFP and pitches from a number of agencies, SNUG appointed SilverStripe Professional Partner, CSL Web. The agency was tasked with designing and building a web platform to address these issues and empower healthcare professionals to communicate across the country.

CSL Web's Aaron Brockhurst explains: "The demands of SNUG are more than just a forum. It has to be scaleable and appealing to users, it has to securely store documents and multimedia files. During the initial research phase we closely studied consumer social networks to understand what makes them so addictive and engaging."

SilverStripe's open source framework was chosen due to its flexibility and previous successes on nationwide public sector projects in New Zealand. SilverStripe helped develop the country's Common Web Platform (CWP) which is used to power over 70 local government websites in the country. The CMS is also open sourced meaning it's completely free to use with no license fees.

"Using SilverStripe's flexible framework allowed us to create a responsive platform that looks great and works perfectly."

Dr Tony Willis, Clinical Lead for IT, Diabetes and CKD at Hammersmith and Fulham CCG added: "Working with CSL Web we identified the need for something more than a traditional forum. CSL Web helped us develop our ideas around layout and templates. The final design was clean, simple and engaging. Using SilverStripe's flexible framework allowed us to create a responsive platform that looks great and works perfectly."


SNUG
Search forums
Michael Saunders
SUPER HELPER
DASHBOARD
FORUMS
LIBRARY
EVENTS
FAVOURITES
ALL CATEGORIES
Diebetes
Cancer
Heart disease
Asthma
Dementia
Arthritis
Joint paint
Cholesterol
Latest
Hot
Subscribed
Filter posts
Create new topic
Organisation preferences
Posted by John Doe 20 mins ago
I'm keen to find out more about organisation preferences and how they affect people in the work place
The Quantified Self & Diabetes
Posted by John Doe 40 mins ago
The Quantified Self is a movement to incorporate technology into data acquisition on aspects of a person's daily life.
Diabetes
type 1
research
2 Likes
Favourite
View previous replies
Re: The Quantified Self & Diabetes
Posted by Adam Doe 18 mins ago
More importantly than the power of the data and the analytics, is the freedom these things allow. Freedom to be able to take control of your own condition.
Like
Re: The Quantified Self & Diabetes
Posted by Sarah Doe 8 mins ago
I've had diabetes since the late 80s, and thankfully, technology is starting to change life for type 1 diabetics.
Like
Re: The Quantified Self & Diabetes
Posted by Jane Doe 2 mins ago
This isn't diabetes specific, but having tried most of them, is my favourite activity tracker.
Like
Write your reply...
Healthcare technology
Posted by David Doe 1 hour ago
16 September 2014 at 7pm
Going
Maybe
Not going
How to Ignore a Plague
Posted by Michael Saunders 2 hours ago
Asthma
symptoms
control

The Benefits

The new SNUG site provides a functional platform for healthcare professionals to discuss SystmOne best practice in a structured and secure environment. It removes the need for an email server and provides a platform where over 700 clinicians are already discussing best practice and top tips to benefit their career, without having to sort through masses of irrelevant information. The number of users is expected to increase to around 2,000 by the end of the year as more clinicians start understanding the benefits.

The site also provides one centralised hub for storing and sharing documents, images and videos without attaching them to emails or having to send them through the post on a CD. This Google Drive inspired storage hub improves the user experience by allowing healthcare professionals to access this information at a time convenient to them.

Engagement on the online platform is also significantly higher than the previous email list with 50,000 visits from healthcare professionals across the UK since launch. Using the Facebook style 'like' and 'share' functions, the platform's algorithm learns what kind of content users are interested in and delivers it to the top of their timelines. This leads to higher engagement levels and return visits.

Creating this online community of SystmOne users has also helped to engage the community offline. Using the social media platform, SNUG tapped into its engaged audience to sell 350 conference tickets on the site, more than ever before.

Dr Tony Willis, Clinical Lead for IT, Diabetes and CKD at Hammersmith and Fulham CCG said: "SNUG's new site has allowed us to power the conversation between healthcare professionals across the country like never before. Many of us were working in our isolated silos around the UK and are unaware of developments or priorities in other parts of the country. This site is changing that and encouraging us to function as a powerful and engaged community."

About the SystmOne National User Group

SystmOne National User Group (SNUG) is a non-profit making organisation that supports users of the clinical software SystmOne. SystmOne is a centrally hosted clinical computer system developed by Horsforth-based TPP (The Phoenix Partnership). It is used by healthcare professionals in the UK predominantly in Primary Care. The system is being deployed as one of the accredited systems in the government's programme of modernising IT in the NHS.

About CSL Web

CSL Web is a leading website design agency and SilverStripe Professional Partner based in the heart of Docklands Arts Quarter in London, home to London's only lighthouse and the legendary Fat Boys Diner.

CSL Web has a proven track record in enterprise level content management systems and a pedigree in developing cutting edge websites and business applications on the SilverStripe framework.

http://www.csl-web.com/

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